God doesn't call us to be more IMPRESSIVE, RELIGIOUS, OPINIONATED, but to be more KIND, GENTLE & PATIENT.

* Our culture should be DEFINED by Galatians 5:22-23.

→ *Is that the fruit of theBarn? Is it what we're known for?*

* Jesus turned religious thinking UPSIDE-DOWN. From judgment to MERCY, condemnation to FORGIVENESS and law to GRACE.

→ *How did Jesus' teaching turn the religious status quo upside-down? What did He attempt to get rid of and what did He replace it with?*

Jesus stood for, taught & demonstrated radical, extraordinary, life-changing grace (John 1:14)

1. His TEACHING
2. Lavish STORIES of grace
3. ACTED OUT grace
4. What He CONFRONTED

→ *What did Jesus teach about grace? What stories did He tell? During which encounters did he act out grace? What did He confront to show how grace trumps law, judgment and condemnation?*

The Gospel HANGS on a THREAD of grace (Rom 3:23-24, Eph 1:7, Heb 4:16).

→ *Why is grace so pivotal to the message of the gospel? If a non-Christian asked you to explain saving grace, how would you do it?*

THE BIG IDEA: Church is supposed to a HAVEN of grace in a world of UNGRACE.

→ *Do we live in a world of ungrace? What symptoms have you noticed? What about your kids at school? Is it getting better or worse?*

* If we're going to be RECOGNISED by anything around here, let it be our GRACE.
* Sadly, Christians are often seen to be UNGRACIOUS.
* Reading the NT, you can't fail to notice sinners RAN TO JESUS.

→ *What are Christians recognised by? What's our 'reputation' as a whole? Why do we have that reputation & is it fair? Is grace one of the stand-out qualities we're known for?*

→ *Why did sinners run to Jesus? Is it true that the more sin in their life the quicker they ran? Do sinners run to the church? How might we change things so they do?*

WHAT DOES GRACE IN OUR CUTLURE LOOK LIKE?

1. Loves FIRST & asks questions LATER, not the other way around.
2. Doesn't make SNAP JUDGMENTS, but CHOOSES GRACE always.
3. Gives others the grace we ourselves would EXPECT.
4. Releases people from weight of GUILT to facilitate CHANGE.
5. FORGIVES 70 X 7 & gives up the right for REVENGE.
6. When people think of us, one of the FIRST WORDS that comes into their thoughts is GRACE.
7. Demonstrated by consistent outpourings of KINDNESS.
8. Recognises people are on a JOURNEY & that our JOB is to help them move FORWARD.
9. People in a MESS feel at home.
10. Challenges UNGRACE.

→ *Which of these jump out at you? Which are we best at as a church? Where do we fall short?*

THE RESULTS

The SWEET FRAGRANCE of Jesus: That AROMA should hit people's noses as they open the front door.

→ *What does that sweet fragrance / aroma smell like?*

→ *"Judgment repels; grace attracts." Discuss!*

People FLOURISH in an environment of grace.

→ *"Leaders lead better, servants serve better, givers are more generous. People are bolder, more creative, more forgiving, comfortable & safe in atmosphere of grace." Discuss!*

RED FLAGS

1. I find myself in a CLIQUE.
2. I start being concerned at how JUDGMENTAL I've become.
3. My eyebrows rise when someone walks into the room who isn't JUST LIKE ME.
4. When our communication becomes US and THEM.
5. When I become critical of people who are not as FAR along the JOURNEY as me.
6. When I can only see people's BEHAVIOUR and can no longer see their HEARTS
7. When being RIGHT is more important to me than being KIND.
8. When I view DIFFERENT as WRONG, value CONFORMITY above DIVERSITY and my personal PREFERENCES above other people's ETERNAL DESTINIES.

→ *Why are these dangerous? Any you're vulnerable to? Have you ever found yourself sliding into one of them? How did you correct yourself?*

WHAT TO DO? = Let's keep WORKING that CULTURE.

Let's be WELCOMING … Let's be INCLUSIVE.

Let's always CHOOSE to look through the EYE of GRACE.

→ *How do you think we could strengthen this culture at theBarn? What could you personally contribute?*

→ *"At theBarn, everyone is on the Welcome Team." Discuss!*

→ *"Grace is our great opportunity." Discuss!*